

BASEBALL—SPORTS OF ALL SORTS—BOXING

WEEGHMAN TIRES OF BEING GOAT OF BASEBALL

By Mark Shields

President Weeghman of the Cubs, aroused at the way his ball players have been returning unsigned contracts, is out with a hot statement to the effect that he will not be made the goat in the strike of the Baseball Players' Fraternity. Weeghman gives some facts and figures tending to justify him in cutting salaries, and comments on the ability of at least one athlete—Jimmy Archer.

But Weeghman does not go to the real root of the question. The Chicago team has been the goat of the National league for some time. Weeghman's fellow magnates are responsible for this condition.

In the days of Charles Webb Murphy, when that person became unpopular with his associates, the Cubs began to be the goats. Murphy deposed Evers as manager. Immediately there was a howl from self-righteous magnates of the league and Murphy was compelled to send Evers to Boston.

At every session of the league Murphy was up for a panning, and the magnates delighted in washing their soiled linen with C. Webb as the unshrinkable soap.

Naturally, the players saw the trend of affairs. So did the people who promoted the Federal league. The players realized that Murphy was not in right and felt they would not be harshly dealt with for trying to run a rinkaboo. And during this time Murphy had a salary roll that would have made some of his tightwad pals sick. His athletes were well paid.

Along came the Federal league and picked on the Cubs. The players were not hard to influence.

Last season, when Joe Tinker had the combined Fed and National

teams to weld into one organization, the National magnates took no pity on the Cubs, but forced them to come within the 21-player limit. They took no cognizance of the fact that Tinker had about 50 athletes—men with signed contracts—on his roll at the start of the season.

There was also something that amounted to more than a suspicion that President Ebbetts of the Dodgers was spreading the information that Joe Tinker would be ousted as Cub manager. League rules do not allow a club owner to interfere in any way with a player under contract to another club, but the league has always dealt leniently with any offenses against the Cubs.

Undoubtedly, if a strike actually comes, the Cubs will be the goats, but Weeghman has the owners of his own league to thank for the condition.

Archer received \$7,500 last season. His contract this year called for \$4,000. He returned it unsigned. Now Weeghman has sent him another paper with even smaller figures and points out that Jim hit .220 last year and played in but 61 games. He was paid for all the time he was on the bench injured.

And, to show that he is trying to be fair, Weeghman has doubled Mike Prendergast's salary, which last season was \$1,500. Prendergast was a better pitcher than Seaton, Lavender or Hendrix, each of whom received at least \$4,000 more than Mike's stipend in 1916.

Weeghman also points out that Archer was slowing up so much that he was thrown out at first base on a single to right field. The Cub boss shouldn't make cracks like that unless he is ready to fire Archer outright.

Taking it by and large, Weeghman is justified in some of his cuts. Some of the players have reductions coming to them, for they came no-